

**In the Claims**

Cancel claims 33-42 without prejudice

Please add the new claims 43-69.

43. (New) A method for treating an arthritic or inflammatory condition in a subject, comprising administering to the subject a protein that causes TNF receptor to be released from human cells in which TNF receptor is expressed

44. (New) The method of claim 43, wherein the protein is a metalloprotease.

45. (New) The method of claim 43, wherein the protein cleaves the human p55 TNF receptor.

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46. (New) The method of claim 43, wherein the protein has at least one of the following properties:

a) it comprises the sequence encoded in the longest open reading frame of SEQ. ID

NO:8;

b) it comprises the sequence encoded in the longest open reading frame of SEQ. ID

NO:9; or

c) it comprises a consecutive sequence that is at least 80% identical to a) or b) (or fragment thereof) which cleaves TNF receptor from human cells in which TNF receptor is expressed.

47. (New) A method for treating an arthritic or inflammatory condition in a subject, comprising administering to the subject a protein having at least one of the following properties:

a) it comprises a sequence encoded in the longest open reading frame of SEQ. ID NO:8;

or

b) it comprises a consecutive sequence that is at least 80% identical to a) (or fragment thereof) which cleaves TNF receptor from human cells in which TNF receptor is expressed.

48. (New) The method of claim 47, wherein the condition is septic shock.

49. (New) The method of claim 47, wherein the condition is arthritis.

50. **(New)** The method of claim 49, wherein the condition is rheumatoid arthritis.

51. **(New)** The method of claim 47, wherein the protein comprises a sequence encoded in the longest open reading frame of SEQ. ID NO:8.

52. **(New)** The method of claim 47, wherein the protein comprises a fragment of the sequence encoded in the longest open reading frame of SEQ. ID NO:8, which cleaves TNF receptor from human cells in which TNF receptor is expressed.

B1 53. **(New)** The method of claim 47, wherein the protein comprises a consecutive sequence that is at least 80% identical to the sequence encoded in the longest open reading frame of SEQ. ID NO:8 (or fragment thereof), which cleaves TNF receptor from human cells in which TNF receptor is expressed.

54. **(New)** The method of claim 47, wherein the protein comprises a consecutive sequence that is at least 95% identical to the sequence encoded in the longest open reading frame of SEQ. ID NO:8 (or fragment thereof), which cleaves TNF receptor from human cells in which TNF receptor is expressed.

55. **(New)** The method of claim 47, wherein the protein is a metalloprotease.

56. **(New)** The method of claim 47, wherein the protein cleaves the human p55 TNF receptor.

57. **(New)** A method for treating an arthritic or inflammatory condition in a subject, comprising administering to the subject a protein having at least one of the following properties:

a) it comprises a sequence encoded in the longest open reading frame of SEQ. ID NO:8;

or

b) it comprises a consecutive sequence that is at least 80% identical to a) (or fragment thereof) which cleaves TNF receptor from human cells in which TNF receptor is expressed.

58. **(New)** The method of claim 57, wherein the condition is septic shock.

59. **(New)** The method of claim 57, wherein the condition is arthritis.

60. **(New)** The method of claim 59, wherein the condition is rheumatoid arthritis.

61. **(New)** The method of claim 57, wherein the protein comprises a sequence encoded in the longest open reading frame of SEQ. ID NO:8.

62. **(New)** The method of claim 57, wherein the protein comprises a fragment of the sequence encoded in the longest open reading frame of SEQ. ID NO:8, which cleaves TNF receptor from human cells in which TNF receptor is expressed.

B1 63. **(New)** The method of claim 57, wherein the protein comprises a consecutive sequence that is at least 80% identical to the sequence encoded in the longest open reading frame of SEQ. ID NO:8 (or fragment thereof), which cleaves TNF receptor from human cells in which TNF receptor is expressed.

64. **(New)** The method of claim 57, wherein the protein comprises a consecutive sequence that is at least 95% identical to the sequence encoded in the longest open reading frame of SEQ. ID NO:8 (or fragment thereof), which cleaves TNF receptor from human cells in which TNF receptor is expressed.

65. **(New)** The method of claim 57, wherein the protein is a metalloprotease.

66. **(New)** The method of claim 57, wherein the protein cleaves the human p55 TNF receptor.

67. **(New)** A pharmaceutical composition comprising a protein formulated in an excipient for administration to a human patient, wherein the protein has at least one of the following properties:

a) it comprises the sequence encoded in the longest open reading frame of SEQ. ID NO:8;

b) it comprises the sequence encoded in the longest open reading frame of SEQ. ID NO:9;

c) it comprises a consecutive sequence that is at least 80% identical to a) or b) (or fragment thereof) which cleaves TNF receptor from human cells in which TNF receptor is expressed.

68. (New) The pharmaceutical composition of claim 64, packaged in a kit with instructions for treating an arthritic condition.

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69. (New) The pharmaceutical composition of claim 64, packaged in a kit with instructions for treating an inflammatory condition.

Concluded

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